Enclosure. Redacted RELEASE WITH DELETION OF IRRELEVANT ITEMS

POL 2-1 GUAT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# AIRGRAM

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| ACTION | | |
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| INR 10 | | |
| RM/R 1 | REP | AF |
| ARA 4 | EUR 5 | FE |
| NEA | CU 5 | INR |
| E | P | IO |
| L | FBO | AID 12 |
| C 2 | O/IB 1 | USUN 1 |
| AGR 2 | COM 2 | FRB |
| INT | LAB 2 | TAR |
| TR 2 | XMB | AIR 15 |
| ARMY 5 | CIA 15 | NAVY 14 |
| OSD 5 | USIA 11 | NSA 3 |
| NEW 1 | | NSC 2 |

A-532 (NO.) | CONFIDENTIAL | AIR POUCH (HANDLING INDICATOR)

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FROM : AMEMBASSY, GUATEMALA

SUBJECT : WEEKA NO. 9

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POLITICAL

1. Coup Rumors Increase Again
2. Arévalo And Arana

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POLITICAL

1. Coup Rumors Increase Again

With the appearance of Juan José AREVALO's Manifesto (Weeka No. 8) and the approach of March, during which he is reportedly scheduled to return to Guatemala to begin his campaign, there have been increasing indications that various plotting groups are becoming more active in seeking a way to block Arévalo's presidential ambitions by ousting Ydígoras and establishing a junta. Many anti-Arévalo and anti-government candidates reportedly believe they would be unable to defeat Arévalo in a free election and that the only alternative short of a preventive coup would be the imposition of an "official candidate" such as Roberto ALEJOS, whom they consider "intolerable". Various candidates have reportedly been meeting to discuss the possibility of supporting such a coup.

Adding fuel to the fire have been reports that officers involved in the November 25 coup attempt have returned clandestinely from exile in El Salvador, the possibility of a student strike (Item 5 below), indications that key military figures have been holding frequent meetings with the Minister of Defense and the fact that the GOG has been taking what appear to be especially heavy security precautions. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Comment: With the impending return of Arévalo and the recent publication of his "Political Letter to the People", many people are becoming increasingly concerned over the dangers inherent in his candidacy. Minister of Defense Enrique PERALTA is still the key figure in any coup plans, and he has reportedly been under pressure from important military colleagues to support a coup or make some other move to ameliorate the situation. (CONFIDENTIAL)

2. Arévalo And Arana

According to the press a judge of first instance affirmed the arrest order for ex-president Juan José Arévalo for complicity in the celebrated 1949 murder of Col. Francisco Javier Arana to clear the way for the pro-Communist Col. Arbenz to become President. In addition, considerable interest was aroused by the public declarations of former Maj. Alfonso Martínez Estévez implying that Arévalo had fore-knowledge of the affair. Martínez Estévez, who witnessed the assassination, was believed by many to have had heavy responsibility for the crime. From his exile in Mexico, he broke a long silence to deny responsibility, to implicate Arévalo and Arbenz and to state he would have more to say when Arévalo returned to Guatemala. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Comment: The Arana case still is a blot on Arévalo's record and could yet play significantly in blocking his Presidential aspirations. What spurred Martínez Estévez to talk remains unclear.

Some believe he felt Arévalo, looking for a scapegoat, would blame him for the crime and thus Martinez was impelled to speak up and tell what he knew. Others believe, and Arevalistas are saying, that anti-Arévalo money was the motive. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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